

Connecticut Explored

Connecticut history, one good story after another.

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To Members of the Conservation and Development subcommittee of Appropriations:

I am writing to ask you not to support the Governor's budget, HB06659, which returns state funding for arts, culture, and tourism to 2019 levels. That level of funding was inadequate then and is even less adequate now. If we go back to pre-pandemic funding levels, the state will lose the considerable investments it made in these sectors in the FY2022/2023 budget.

The Connecticut Arts Alliance, Connecticut Humanities, and Connecticut Tourism Coalition have worked together on an Arts, Culture, and Tourism Funding Roadmap that offers legislators a guide to meaningful, reliable, and equitable investment in these important contributors to the state's economy and workforce.

I am the publisher of **the state's only history magazine, *Connecticut Explored* (as well as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Institute for American Indian Studies)**. We are celebrating 20 years in publication! Connecticut Explored, Inc. is a non-profit organization which produces a quarterly publication of articles about the past, with spotlights that highlight events going on around the state. Our beautifully designed magazine with engaging narratives is distributed to over 5000 people. We have more than 4100 paid subscribers and we provide 1000 complimentary copies of each issue to small historical societies and museums to send to their members, both to boost our readership and to help support those institutions. Our readership reach is approximately 11,000 people. We are working hard to expand that reach.

We also publish educational materials, including two books widely used in schools, *Where I Live, Connecticut* (3rd grade curriculum) and *Venture Smith's Colonial Connecticut* (5th grade curriculum, African-American history). We also have a free podcast produced with the State Historian emeritus, Walt Woodward, called *Grating the Nutmeg*.

Our offices are in the History Department of Central Connecticut State University as an organizational partner with their Public History Program. We received a partnership grant from Connecticut Humanities in 2022 and are committed to serving the people of Connecticut by making the state's history accessible to everyone.

The arts and humanities are historically underfunded, but as the pandemic period has shown, our institutions are an investment in the state's infrastructure, and in educational and workforce development. For every \$1 Connecticut invested per capita in arts and culture in

2020, Massachusetts and New York invested \$1.60, and Rhode Island invested \$2. Pre-pandemic CT state funding for tourism ranked lowest among our neighboring states.

Connecticut Explored is benefitting right now from a CT Humanities' operational grant that will help us keep our prices affordable (\$30 yr. for a regular subscription, \$25 for seniors, and \$20 for students and teachers). Without such support we would need to raise prices, putting the magazine out of reach of some of our readers and libraries.

Connecticut can compete with neighboring states for visitors. We have so many possibilities in our state, and our magazine is dedicated to showcasing those cultural institutions that offer visitors a valuable experience.

Our magazine will be an important part of celebrating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution through special issues and stories, as well as an interactive, online simulation aimed at school kids to allow them to experience life with the Connecticut Line of the Continental Army during the Revolution.

We are just one organization among many which has been able to flourish during the last few years. We celebrated our 20th anniversary publishing the magazine by honoring game-changer contributors to our state's history, producing public programs and publishing cutting edge history.

No one can deny the importance of arts and humanities for enriching our minds and hearts, and making our state one of the best places to live in. We have some of the best schools in the U.S., but we often forget how arts and cultural institutions support that educational excellence. There is tremendous innovation in the field, and we need the legislature's support to keep the momentum going. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katherine A. Hermes". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Dr. Katherine Hermes

Publisher and Executive Director, Connecticut Explored